



**RLUS**

Russian Language Undergraduate Studies

**St Petersburg Guide**



## Welcome to St Petersburg!

### Contact Details:

Benedict School  
1, Srednyaya Podyacheskaya Str.  
St. Petersburg  
(M. [Sennaya Ploschad'](#)/[Sadovaya](#)/[Spasskaya](#))  
+7 (812)314-8172, +7 (812) 325-7573

### Your Representatives:

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+79052335378      +79650755341  
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### Postal Address:

Benedict School, PO Box 178  
Saint Petersburg, 190000 Russia

Benedict School has been working together with RLUS to bring students to St Petersburg for over 20 years. We hope that you will have an enjoyable and rewarding stay in Russia's cultural capital! If you have any questions that are not covered in this document, please do not hesitate to contact any of the representatives of RLUS or the school!

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The school is located near **Sennaya Ploschad'** - one of the most central and historic areas of St. Petersburg. Here you can find many fascinating (and inexpensive!) places to visit and things to see.



To get to the school, you can use the following route:

From metro station [Sennaya Ploschad'/Sadovaya/Spasskaya](#), follow Canal Griboedova south. The street numbers should be getting higher on your left.

As you reach building 88-90 on Canal Griboedova, turn left to **Srednyaya Pod'yacheskaya**. The second building on your right is Benedict School. You will see a sign with its logo in the window!



### **UPON YOUR ARRIVAL**

The RLUS **group flight** will be met by Benedict and RLUS representatives, who will welcome you to Russia and take you to your accommodation.

If you are **arriving independently**, you can, of course, take a taxi to your accommodation. You can get a taxi from the booths either inside the arrivals terminal beside the doors or the ones directly outside. On average, it costs about 700 rubles to get to the centre by taxi. Do make sure, however, that you stay by the window of the booth to avoid being poached by other taxi drivers who charge by a meter.

The cheapest option is to take a bus or "marshrutka" (see TRAVEL) to metro station [Moskovskaya](#), where you can then go all over the city. You will then be met by the RLUS

representatives on the first day of classes.

If you are staying with a homestay family, they will take care of you for the first two days, giving you guidance on the city, helping you to change money and buy a Russian simcard. If you are staying in Benedict School's Hotel, please do not hesitate to contact us using the numbers above if you need any help or if you get lost!

### **PUBLIC TRANSPORT FROM THE AIRPORT**

Getting to the centre from the airport is cheap and relatively easy. There are regular buses (e.g. no. **13**) and marshrutka buses (e.g. **K3**) that run from the airport to the nearest metro station, [Moskovskaya](#). These can be found right outside the arrival terminal on your left as you exit. The bus is the slightly cheaper option at 25-27 rubles but the marshrutka is still only 30 rubles (prices for Nov/Dec 2011). For both of these you pay to the driver although there is sometimes a conductor on the bus.

When you reach the metro (it looks like a regular subway with a small blue **M** over it), just should go downstairs and turn left. Go through the swing doors into the main hall and there will be cash desks on your right where you can buy a token/zheton (25 rubles). To get to the centre, you need to take a train in the direction of [Parnas](#). [Nevskiy Prospekt](#) metro is roughly 20 minutes away.

### **YOUR COURSE**

**Classes** will begin the Monday after you arrive, at 10am.

The Director of Russian is Olga Kainova. You will also meet the General Director of the Benedict School, Natalia Dmitrievna Rostovtseva.

During your course, you will study a number of subjects, taking in various aspects of Russian language and culture. The timetable includes the classes Media, Grammar, Translation, Film, Pronunciation and Conversation. According to the Russian educational system, each lesson lasts not 60 minutes but 2x 45minutes (without a break).

On the first day you will sit a placement test to allocate you to a group, after which you will receive your timetable for the semester.

More details can be found on the Benedict website: <http://eng.benedict.ru/>

### **VISAS AND REGISTRATION**

When you arrive in Russia, you will have to fill in a **migration card**. This small piece of paper is very important, so please keep it safe and make sure that you have it stamped with the correct date. Check this has been stamped and dated **BEFORE YOU LEAVE THE AIRPORT!** This is particularly important for people making their own way to Russia, as group flighters will have their migration cards checked by the RLUS reps.

You will not always be given one on the plane so please make sure you ask for it (better to do it on the plane so that you can ask any questions, if you need to).

On arriving at the school you will be **registered**. This is required by authorities to make your stay in the country legal and must be done within three working days after your arrival.

You have to bring the following items:

- passport
- visa
- migration card
- registration fee – 600 rubles

N.B. The registration fee here covers your initial registration and the registration of your multi-entry visa, should you need one. Every time you leave the country after you will have to pay 500 rubles to reregister.

If you are on a 16, 18 or 36 week course, you will have to extend your visa. You will receive a **Multi-Entry Visa**. You will be able to get it within 6 weeks of your arrival. The processing takes 4 weeks, but can only be started after your initial registration is completed (2 weeks.) In order to apply for the Multi-Entry Visa you'll need to bring:

- 4 photos on matte paper
- 1000rubles fee

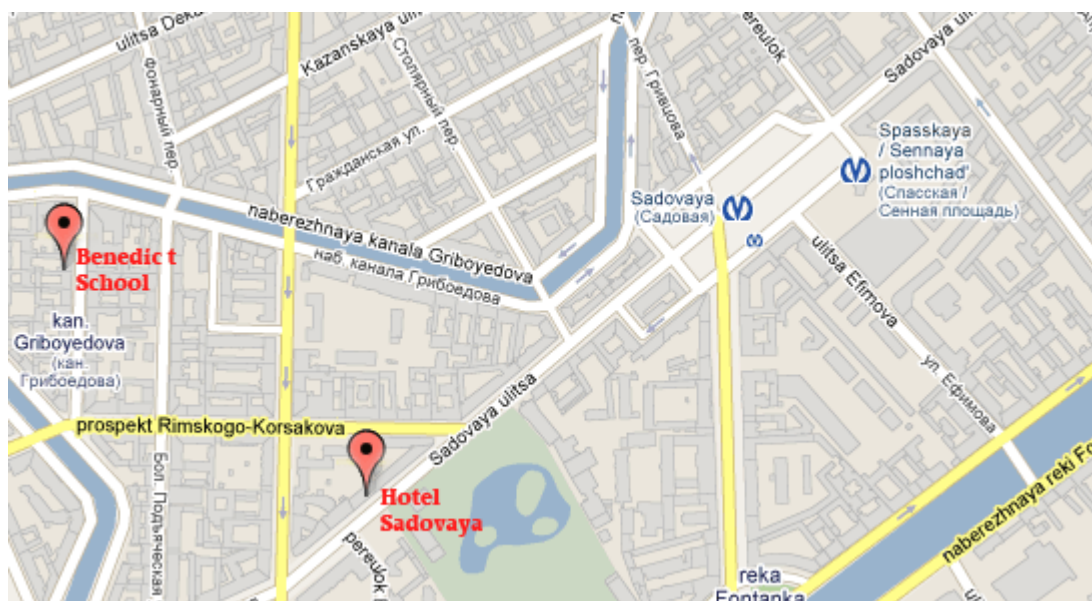
At the moment a HIV test is not required in order to receive your multi-entry visa, but the rules have a tendency to change quite often. If you do need to have a certificate, you can have it done quickly and inexpensively in the city, as the authorities usually do not accept UK certificates.

IF YOU WANT TO GUARANTEE THAT YOU WILL RECEIVE YOUR EXTENDED VISA BY THE FIRST READING WEEK (For dates, please see the document on the website entitled **Course Dates**) YOU SHOULD HAND IN ALL THESE DOCUMENTS ASAP.

### ACCOMMODATION

There are two accommodation options for the course at the Benedict School. You can either choose to live in a **homestay**, with a Russian family, or you can stay at Benedict's approved hostel, **Hotel Sadovaya**.

We strongly advise that all RLUS students stay in either homestay or hostel accommodation for the first month after their arrival.



The **Hotel Sadovaya** (<http://www.sadovaya53.ru/en/>) is located in the centre of the city, near metro **Sennaya Ploshchad'/Sadovaya/Spasskaya**, and less than 10 minutes' walk from the Benedict School.

At the Hotel Sadovaya you will **share** a room with one other student (this will of course be another Benedict student). There are a couple of showers and a washing machine available.



However the washing machine can only be accessed with a key so it may be more convenient to use the local laundrette (but do be prepared for a 15/20 minute walk). There is a kitchen where you can prepare your own meals, but please be aware that it is very, very basic with only two hobs, a small oven and a microwave (and again you have to sign for a key to use this). Otherwise, you will be able to get breakfast from the cafe in the same building, where there will be special breakfast deals provided for RLUS students. <http://www.royalpizza.ru/>.

For people with dietary requirements this may not be the best option as it isn't fully self catering. However, this may not be too much of an issue as there are hundreds of cafes in the Sennaya area.

Rent for the Hotel Sadovaya is payable by the 3<sup>rd</sup> of the month. The hostel is very basic, so please be prepared for that, but the location is great and you can always just stay there for a month while you're settling in.



If you choose **Homestay** accommodation, you will be assigned a room with a family living in St Petersburg. They are always friendly and do what they can to help you. They usually do not speak English, so this will be a great opportunity for you to practise your Russian! You will pay your rent directly to the Benedict School within the first three days of the

month. The price you pay for homestay includes breakfast but not dinner. You can arrange to make extra payments for an evening meal (250 rubles) or laundry (150 rubles). Please note that bedding will be supplied, and so you only need to bring a towel. (And clothes!). For **36 week students**, please note that over the Christmas holidays the Benedict School charges 4000 rubles for you to leave your stuff with your landlady (it is also to make sure that they keep the room for you).

Homestay is a great insight into life in Russia but please be aware that you are staying in someone else's home. There isn't a curfew as such, but it is a good idea to let your hosts know if you will be home later than 11pm. There are also a couple of cultural differences that might be helpful to know in advance: you should wear slippers indoors and the food might differ from what you are used to. If you talk to your host family about your preferences, they will try to accommodate you as far as possible.

You will, no doubt, wish to **contact** your family when you arrive, in which case we suggest using an international phone card if Skype is not available.

Homestays more often than not have access to the Internet – but not always! In this case you can buy a dongle quite cheaply (see MOBILE PHONES AND INTERNET).

If you should decide to leave your homestay or hotel and find your **own accommodation**, you must give a month's notice or pay the rent for that month. You should also tell your university's liaison officer and your RLUS rep. Unfortunately, RLUS is bound by legal conditions not to get involved in your search for a new apartment.

We do encourage students to remain in Benedict accommodation to avoid difficulties with papers, registration, money, and difficult landlords.

### SAFETY

St Petersburg is a big, bustling city and so you should take the same precautions as you would do in any other large town. Be particularly careful of pickpockets and make sure your valuables are not hanging out of your back pocket! Girls: don't bring low hanging bags; try to bring something that hangs under your arm or in front of you. This will reduce the risk of pick pocketing.

**You do not need to carry your original passport but you should have a copy of your passport, visa, migration card and registration on you.** These are all stamped with the Benedict School details.



multi-entry visa



migration card



registration

This is particularly important for gentlemen as you may be stopped by the police. In this case don't worry, just show them your documents and if there are any problems just get them to contact Benedict School (+7 (812)314-8172, +7 (812) 325-7573) or your Reps.

You shouldn't carry large amounts of money around with you. **We also advise that you leave all unnecessary cards at home i.e. your driving license, your national insurance card, and student card (if it isn't an international student card). These cards are totally useless in Russia and better left at home!**

If you are going to go out at night, try not to overdo it as you make yourself more vulnerable to dangers.

Do plan how you are going to get home and try to go together with someone else. We recommend that you use **taxis at night** – such as 6-000-000, 068 or 777-1-777, as they are reliable, safe, and not much more expensive than other forms of night transport. RLUS does not condone the use of "private cars" or "gypsy cabs". However, if you do take one, ensure that there is only one person in the car, agree the price before getting into the car, and show caution!

Lastly: Don't drink the tap water! The plumbing system is old and badly maintained, so you should either boil your water or use a Brita filter, or best of all, both! Bottled water is inexpensive and available everywhere.

## **MONEY**

You can **exchange money** in numerous banks and bureaux de change around the city. (Your host family should show you these in the first couple of days if you need to change money) You can't use dollars, euros or pounds in St Petersburg but changing them will not be a problem.

You will be able to use your bank cards to withdraw money from **cash machines** in the city, but please remember that most banks charge a fee for this and some have limited service. Also, many shops and restaurants do not take cards and you should be prepared for this, do carry some cash just in case. However, credit cards are becoming more common in large supermarkets and shopping malls. Many places ask for ID when using your card. A copy of your passport will be fine.

There are **credit cards** available in the UK, which are commission-free and great for travelling. However, beware that commission-free does not always mean that they have a great exchange rate. The Post Office offers a Classic card, which is recommended by [moneysupermarket.com](http://moneysupermarket.com) (not by RLUS), as it charges 14.9% APR at home and abroad and is commission-free. The advantage of this, and one to look out for in other cards, is that the Post Office has a 24hr service available in case of loss or theft. It is good to know that these things are available, but do shop around to find the best deal (and please let us know if you think you've found it!!).

## **WHAT TO DO IF SOMETHING GOES WRONG**

Emergency numbers:

Benedict School: +7 (812) 314 8172

British Consulate: +7 (812) 320 3200

Euomed: +7(812) 327 0301

Fire Service: 01

Police: 02

Visa Section: +7 (812) 320 3239

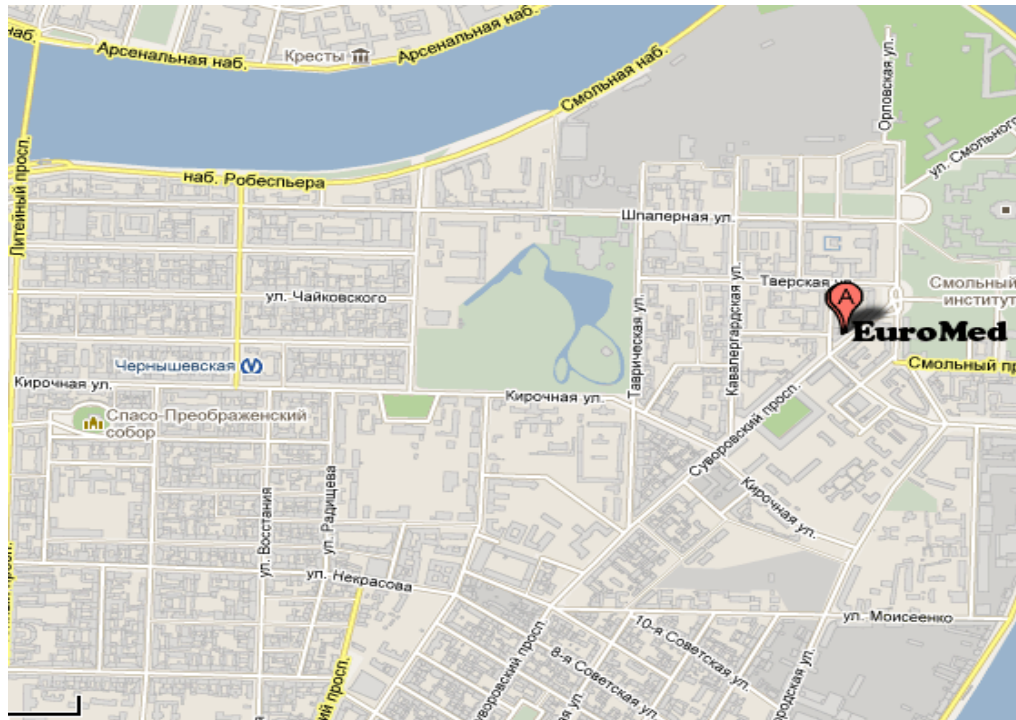
American Clinic: +7 (812) 740 2090

Ambulance: 03

If calling from a mobile you must call the unified Emergency Number 112 and then specify which service you require.

If you have an emergency, you can reach the RLUS reps on our emergency phone numbers:  
Ciara: +7 965 075 5314                      Seb: +7 905 233 5378

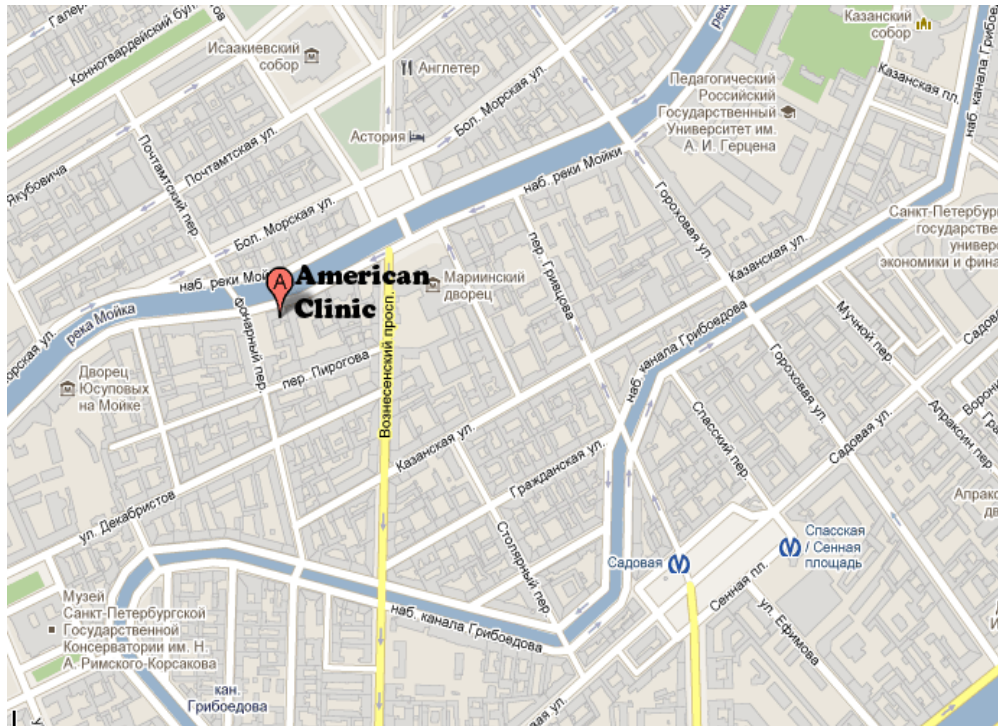
If you lose any of your **documents**, contact your RLUS rep straight away, and together with Benedict School, they will sort everything out.



If you need to see a **doctor**, you can go to Euomed on Suvorovsky Prospekt or the American Clinic on Moika Canal. Please ensure that you have your insurance policy with you, as well as a phone number of someone at the insurance company.

It is normal to have to pay up front for outpatient procedures, however it is possible to avoid this by getting the hospital administration to contact the insurance company themselves to arrange a guarantee of payment. Inpatient procedures won't have to be paid for up front. The best thing to do is to contact one of the RLUS reps if you need to go and see a doctor, as they are experienced in dealing with insurance issues.

In case of theft or other emergencies requiring a visit to the **police**, please get in touch with your RLUS rep straight away. They can help you in any situation. If you are unlucky enough to find yourself in a police station without your rep, **sign nothing!!** You will be given a phone call, and you should use it to contact your RLUS rep! Do not stop until you get in touch. They will contact the necessary people and save you! **If you are forced to sign something, you must write that you do not understand what you are signing.**



## LIFE IN ST PETERSBURG

St Petersburg is an exciting and fascinating city, with lots to offer. Here are some things that you should know about:

### MOBILE PHONES & INTERNET

No doubt one of the first things you'll want to do in the city is set yourself up with a **simcard**. The main providers in Petersburg are MTS, Beeline and Megafon. Megafon generally seems to be the most expensive of the three, and MTS and Beeline tend to be preferred by young people. There is also a provider called Tele2, which is cheap, but does not always work when corresponding with British providers such as Orange.

You can buy a sim from any mobile shop (such as **Svyaznoi & Evroset**) and then top up using the touchscreen (orange) machines on the streets, in shops, and in the metro.

If you want to buy a **dongle**, we recommend Yota or MTS. They are a little bit more expensive than buying Beeline or another service, but they are much better and ensure you get good signal wherever you are in the city.

If you are **living privately**, routers can be quite expensive but there is a good, cheap internet provider called Tvoi Internet: they give you a free router when you sign up and also install it free-of-charge. For more info, Google them! Also, do make sure that you check with your landlord before drilling holes in the wall!

### TRANSPORT

The city is quite large, but it is easy to get around. There is a **metro** system which is reliable and fairly comfortable, and although it can get quite squished at rush hour, it is still the fastest and most convenient way to get from A to B.



There is also a large network of **buses, trams, trolleybuses** which are all run by the state transport company. The metro and other state transport is reasonably priced and you can get a travel card for various periods (eg 20 journeys for 15 days, 40 journeys for a month). Non-Russians are not able to get discounted rates, even students, so getting a **travel card** is the best-value option.



Aside from these, there are also **marshrutkas** - private buses in the form of minivans, which are more expensive than state transport but run more often and much faster. They are like "taxis", which follow a set route. You can flag them down at any point, not only at stops. Similarly, you can ask them to stop anywhere (that is safe) by shouting out «остановите пожалуйста». They can take some getting used to, but in fact are very useful and quite fun.

Most forms of transport run from between **about 6am until midnight**. At night you should make sure to take a **taxi**, avoid walking around on the street alone.

There are also trains that are quite inexpensive, going out to the suburbs (beautiful places like Pushkin and Pavlovsk) and nearby cities like Helsinki, Moscow, Tallinn.

Vitebsky vokzal – trains to Baltic states and Eastern Europe

Finlyandsky vokzal – trains to Finland

Moskovsky vokzal – trains to Moscow

Ladozhsky vokzal – trains to the north of Russia

Baltiyskiy vokzal – local trains

## ENTERTAINMENT

Benedict School can provide you with a **student card** that entitles you to a discount for students, and even better, to Russian student prices, which are considerably lower.

In order to receive it, you need to bring one passport size photo and 150 rubles.

This card entitles you to free entry to the Hermitage and discounts in many other **museums and galleries**, and quite large reductions on tickets to the theatre and opera.

St Petersburg gives you the unique opportunity to see many world-class plays and musical performances for a very small price. There are loads of beautiful galleries and museums to visit, and the literary tradition of St Petersburg is maintained in museums and landmarks, as well as the general cultural atmosphere of the city.

Apart from this, there are also many cinemas including several IMAX screens, and art-house cinemas showing a range of world films. You can find listings online at

<http://www.afisha.ru/spb/cinema/> and also in the free English-language newspaper **The St Petersburg Times**, which can be found in Benedict School, in various expat-oriented places around the city, or online.

## FOOD AND DRINK

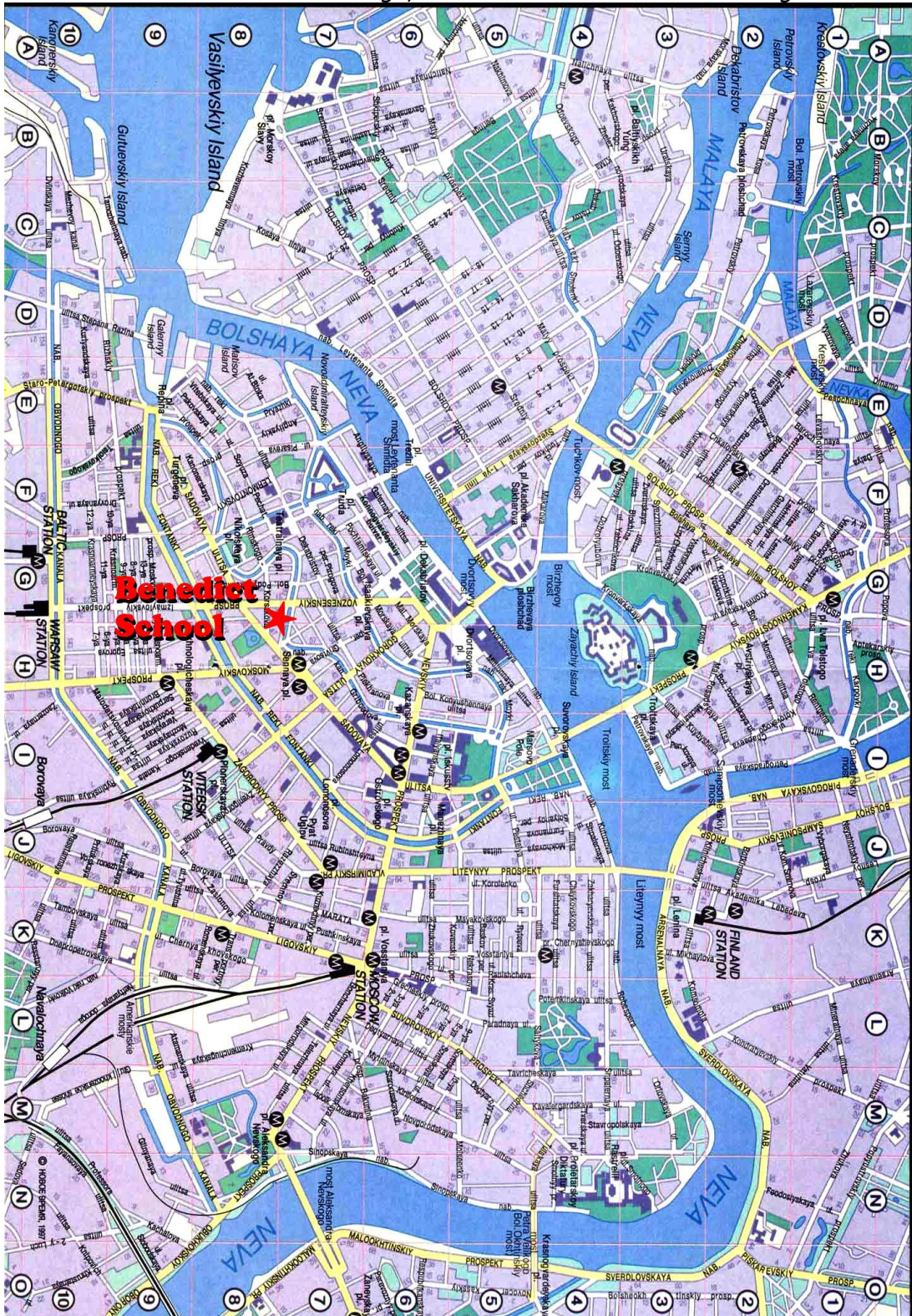
There are lots and lots of places to eat and drink ranging from the deliciously inexpensive to the painfully luxurious. You can find **restaurants** offering just about any cuisine and you can find information about them in leaflets like *St Petersburg in Your Pocket*, in the *St Petersburg Times*, or, again, <http://www.afisha.ru/spb/restaurants/>

Be aware that **credit cards are not accepted everywhere here**, so if you're thinking of dining in a small, out-of-the-way cafe, best to carry some cash, just in case! They will, however, generally be accepted in chain restaurants and high street shops, but not always in your local produkty.

More recently two huge **shopping centres** have opened in the centre of the city. One is called Galeria <http://www.galeria-spb.ru/> and Nevskii Centre <http://www.nevskycentre.ru/>. These are practically identical to Western shopping malls with many shops you will be familiar with such as Next, River Island and even M&S!

The best way to get quality food is to buy it from a **supermarket**. In the centre due to space limitation large supermarkets are few a far between but there are a few including: Perekrestok on Sennaya Ploschad (inside PIK shopping centre), Stockmann food court (inside Nevskii centre shopping centre) and Lend (inside Vladmirskii Passage shopping

centre (<http://www.vpassage.ru/> ). If you are looking for a true Russian food buying experience then head to Sennaya market where you can haggle for meat and veg with the market traders. A word of caution though, it can be somewhat overwhelming!



Centre of St Petersburg Map



УСЛОВНЫЕ ОБОЗНАЧЕНИЯ MAP SYMBOLS

-      ЛИНИИ МЕТРОПОЛИТЕНА SUBWAY LINES
-  СТАНЦИИ ПЕРЕСАДОК CHANGE FOR ANOTHER LINE

-  СТАНЦИЯ СТРОИТСЯ THE STATION IS UNDER CONSTRUCTION
-  ЖЕЛЕЗНОДОРОЖНЫЕ ВОКЗАЛЫ, СТАНЦИИ, ПЛАТФОРМЫ RAILROAD STATIONS

-  АВТОБУСЫ BUSES
-  ПОРТЫ SEA AND RIVER PORTS

All the best, and good luck!  
RLUS